



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ



Vol. 1, No. 19

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U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Mark Woodbury

Iraqi Special Police Commandos of the 2nd Brigade scramble to their Revas before heading into Ramadi. The well-travelled Iraqi unit is charged with securing the sometimes volatile city.

United Iraqi Commandos pulling security in Ramadi

Story by Senior Airman Mark Woodbury
MNSTC-I Public Affairs Office

RAMADI — The 2nd Brigade of the Iraqi Special Police Commandos are taking the fight against insurgents to Ramadi, deploying earlier this month from Baghdad at the request of Coalition forces.

The Freedom Brigade, formerly known as the Wolf Brigade, got its start as a self-formed unit designed to fight and arrest terrorists in Iraq after Coalition forces arrived in 2003. Many of the commandos received their training in the old Iraqi Army, according to the commandos.

The commandos were later incorporated into the Ministry of Interior, the governmental branch in charge of police, as a pro-

fessional force shortly after the move to build up Iraqi Security Forces. They received additional and ongoing training through the Special Police Forces Academy and Coalition advisers working side-by-side with them. The Coalition forces are also assisting in equipping the commandos in their fight against the insurgency.

"The commandos were asked to come to Ramadi simply because we realize they can accomplish a part of the mission here more efficiently than anyone else," said U.S. Army Col. Jeffrey Buchanan, commander of the Special Police Transition Team assigned to the Special Police

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Gen. Casey's Corner

Last week Iraqi Prime Minister al-Ja'fari, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and I announced

the decision not to deploy two brigades scheduled to come to Iraq early next year. The 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, based out of Fort Riley, Kansas, was originally scheduled to deploy to central Iraq in December to replace the 29th Brigade Combat Team. Additionally, the

Baumholder, Germany-based 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, was to deploy to the Iraqi province of Diyala in November to replace the 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. The 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division will remain in Kuwait to serve as a "call-forward force," ready to deploy into Iraq should security conditions dictate.

The decision, affecting approximately 7,000 U.S. active-duty Soldiers, was based on the cumulative impact of the Iraqi Security Forces across the country. Specifically, two successful elections and a referendum on the Constitution were key to advancing the political process; the growth and increased capability of the 216,000 strong ISF; and the operational success across Iraq, especially in restoration of control of the borders. All of these events together allowed Coalition Forces to begin the transition to a support-

By Gen. George W. Casey
Multi-National Force - Iraq
Commanding General



ing role.

This is a significant decision, and it is a step toward acknowledging sufficient ISF capability in maintaining domestic order. Not only is it a demonstration of respect for ISF capability, but it demonstrates our commitment to honor the pledge "as they stand up, we will stand down."

Although the ISF is gaining strength and capability, they will continue to be supported. Coalition Forces will still be required to provide support to ISF security operations and to lead independent operations against the insurgents who remain committed to disrupting the democratic political development of Iraq.

As I have said many times before, there is no quick solution to the issues facing Iraq. There is much more to do. In order to succeed, the people of Iraq must unite behind their security forces and their government, and turn against terror and violence in 2006. This is part of a conditions-based assessment process in coordination with the ISF and Iraqi government leadership. Our next assessment for continued transition will take place this spring, but remember, this will be a gradual process that will take place over 2006 and beyond.

Airman and teacher

Story by By Suzanne M. Fournier

Gulf Region Southern District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BASE CAMP ADDER — Deploying to Iraq with an Army unit offered a unique opportunity for an Air Force officer to be blue in a green Army world. U.S. Air Force Academy instructor, Maj. Alberto Mezarina volunteered because he wanted to do his part to fight the global war on terrorism.

"Even though I wear the Air Force uniform, I'm part of the Department of Defense and as operation tempo increases and our forces grow smaller, we find ourselves able to fill needs across the Department of Defense," Mezarina said. "I'm an Air Force civil engineer working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I work with Department of Army civilian colleagues; a Navy Chief Petty Officer schedules my trips, and we're all stationed at an Army installation in Iraq, guarded by Air Force security forces."

The team goes beyond joint operations, blending colorful Coalition force flags of the Italian Joint Task Force with British, Australian, Romanian and Japanese military forces.

He said he hit the ground running in July and has been running ever since. Initially, Mezarina was resident engineer in charge of construction in the Thi-Qar Province near Nasiriyah. Three weeks later, he was named area engineer for Thi-Qar and Methane Provinces with more than \$464 million in Iraq Redevelopment and Construction projects and responsibilities to coordinate with the new Iraqi government officials and multinational forces.

"Working in Iraq presented multiple challenges, but as an academy teacher, communication comes naturally. I've seen walls of inhibition come down by bringing the right people together and by simply facilitating communication. Set a few facts and techniques in front of someone, begin dialogue and you can inspire change and build consensus," Mezarina said.

He used all his communication talents to set standards and define relationships with Iraqi contractors and customers; to enhance understanding of statements of work and set limits to endless modifications.

"We've made progress and now the time is ripe to raise our expectations. We can no longer be satisfied with simply swapping swords for plowshares."

MNF-I Commanding General
Gen. George W. Casey Jr.

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8th Iraqi Division gets certified

More and more Iraqi units taking back their country

Story by Lt. Cmdr. Bartosz Zajda
Multi-National Division Central South
Public Information Office

AD DIWANIYAH — Soldiers from the 8th Iraqi Army Division had reason to celebrate, as they became a certified unit on Dec. 20.

Coming of age during the parliamentary elections, the certification gives division commanders the authority to plan and conduct operations throughout the Babil, Al Qadisiyah and Wasit provinces.

The growing capability of the Iraqi Army has been impressive, said Maj. Gen. Piotr Czerwinski, Commanding General of Multi-National Division Central South. "We want to see the Iraqi Army capable of maintaining the domestic order."

The division has been building its ranks gradually over the past year. Soldiers' training included planning and executing counter insurgency operations which encompassed cordon and search techniques. They also worked checkpoints, patrolling and convoy protection. Tactical training such as weapons proficiency, engineering, communication, medical support and logistics also contributed to overall certification.

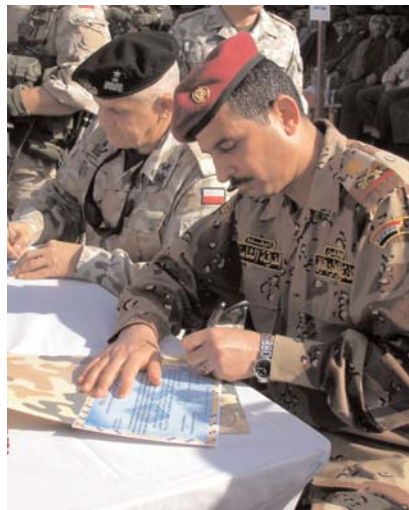
Certification is only a graduation from training. Now, the Iraqi Soldiers will take the lead role in combat and security missions in the area, becoming independent of Coalition support.



Soldiers from the 8th Iraqi Division drive down the streets of Ad Diwaniyah during a parade after the force was certified by Multi-National Division Central South.



Above: Maj. Gen. Othman Ali Ferhood holds a Kalashnikov rifle, presented by MND-CS Commanding General Maj. Gen. Piotr Czerwinski as a symbol of certification. Above right: Ferhood and Czerwinski sign the certification protocol. Right: Soldiers from the 8th Iraqi Div., march down the streets of Ad Diwaniyah during a parade.



Commandos

from page 1

Commando Division. "The commandos can establish relationships with the local people and are able to get tips on where the insurgents live and store weapons because of this."

Buchanan was among several Coalition advisors and 50 Iraqi Special Police Commandos who spent two days in Ramadi this week to check on the progress of the relocation. The commandos made the two-hour convoy resulting in the detainment of seven suspected insurgents.

In the short time the commandos have been in Ramadi, they've already established contacts and seen progress in the fight against insurgents, officials said.

"The commandos understand the Iraqi people and because of this, the people are more prone to trust them," said Buchanan. "It also shows the local people that Iraqis and Iraq as a whole, are interested in efficiently protecting their cities."

The Ramadi trip was also an opportunity to set up radio communication back to

Baghdad and for Coalition advisors to meet with commando leadership.

In a meeting with Iraqi and Coalition leaders, Iraqi Maj. Gen. Rasheed, Special Police Commando Division commander, said he is confident the commandos will accomplish their mission in Ramadi, a predominantly Sunni city, regardless of the perception of the commandos being a Shiite force.

"We are an equally balanced force of Sunnis and Shiites," Rasheed said. "However, it is not about how many commandos are Sunnis and how many are Shiites. It is every commando serving and protecting a unified Iraq."

Coalition leadership has also been impressed with the professionalism of the commandos and confident they will be an asset to the fight in Ramadi.

"I have worked with forces from many Arab countries, but the commandos are the finest and most professional troops I've had the pleasure to work with," Buchanan said. "They are a great addition to providing safety to this city."



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Mark Woodbury

A 2nd Brigade Special Police Commando makes last-minute preparations inside a Reva before heading out on a mission.

MND-CS donations spark smiles from children

Story and photo by Lt. Cmdr. Bartosz Zajda
Multi-National Division Central South, Public Affairs Office

The Multi-National Division Central South Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center donated supplies to a kindergarten in Afak, 18.5 miles east of Ad Diwaniyah, on Dec. 19.

The supplies included mattresses, tables, chairs, bicycles, children tents and cars, puzzles, wooden blocks, sport toys, school supplies, and many toys and mascots.

More than 100 shoes and clothes were also donated to the children from the poorest families.

The donations were organized by Polish Soldiers assigned to the division.

During the Soldiers' first visit to the kindergarten, they saw that children didn't have any toys, mattresses or school supplies.

Since August, MND-CS Soldiers have donated two tons of clothes, 500 school supply items, 440 shoes, 700 kilograms of hygienic supplies, 70 layettes and more than 50 wheelchairs for disabled people. In September, MND-CS donated medicines worth \$500,000 for hospitals in Ad Diwaniyah. The medicines were provided by the humanitarian organization "Freedom and Peace Trust". MND-CS humanitarian assistance is provided for Iraqi schools, hospitals, old people's homes, kindergartens and orphanages.



Courtesy photo

A MND-CS Polish Soldier hands a giant blue bear to a group of Iraqi children at a kindergarten in Afak.



Heroes of the Week

Machine-like medic saves Soldiers

Story and photo by Sgt. Jason Mikeworth
207th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BALAD — It started as a normal August day. Soldiers of Task Force 1/128th comprised of K Troop, 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment and 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, were returning to Forward Operating Base O’Ryan after a successful mission to escort an engineer unit. They were just minutes away from an improvised explosive device changing their lives forever.

The IED, made from two anti-tank mines, detonated beneath the lead vehicle of the patrol, tossing the humvee into the air and causing it to land on its roof. The smoke and dust obscured the vehicle from the view of the rest of the patrol.

“The first thing I did was give a contact report,” said Sgt. 1st Class Eric Weaver, a platoon sergeant with K Troop. “Then I radioed to the vehicle to see if they had rolled through it.”

There was no answer.

Sgt. Chad Mahutga, a medic with

3rd Platoon, got to the scene as quickly as he could.

“It was like time stood still,” Mahutga said. “As soon as my feet hit the ground, it was like operating on instinct.”

Mahutga went to work organizing a casualty collection point with the help of Combat Life Savers from the engineers and from K Troop. McCullough ordered another vehicle closer to the scene to help shield the wounded from the rounds that were discharging in the fire.

Ten years of experience as a combat medic were put to feverish use as Mahutga worked to treat shrapnel wounds, head injuries and to keep one Soldier’s airway open.

“Doc Mahutga was like a machine. He was doing what he was trained to do,” said McCullough.

Weaver also expressed his admiration of Mahutga’s actions.

“Sgt. Mahutga is a franchise player, I’m glad he’s on my team,” Weaver said. “None of them would have survived if he hadn’t been there. He took a bad situation and made it better.”



Sgt. Chad Mahutga, a medic with the 1/128th, inspects his aid bag before leaving on a mission.

The sewing command sergeant major

Story by 2nd Lt. Anthony D. Buchanan
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SAMMARA — When you think of a command sergeant major you think of someone who is a standard bearer for all enlisted personnel.

You think of a hard-charging, motivating role model. You think of a person who, if you get in their way, they’ll stomp all over you.

The 3rd ID’s 3/69th Armor Battalion’s command sergeant major is just this type of individual, but he has a lot more to offer.

Not only is Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick W. Muskevitsch, a native of New London, Wis., the pinnacle of what an NCO should strive to be, he also does sewing and alterations for his Soldiers on a daily basis here

at FOB Brassfield-Mora.

Soldiers of the 3/69th are still wearing Desert Combat Uniforms and haven’t been issued Army Combat Uniforms. During his current deployment, he has managed to make alterations to about 800 Soldiers uniforms.

“All they do is put their uniforms on a hangar and hang them on my door,” said Muskevitsch. “When I not on a mission, I just pull out the old sewing machine and sew.”

Muskevitsch doesn’t charge his Soldiers anything. He just wants his Soldiers to look good.

“People talk about soldiers looking unprofessional and not staying in uniform, you have to help them,” said Muskevitsch. “These kids get their uniforms shredded,

torn-up and shot-up; they bring them to me, and I fix them.”

The closest place that Soldiers can get alterations done is at FOB Speicher, about 35 miles away, and even then, not all of the Soldiers can get there.

“Send a kid on the road, just to get his patches sewn on? I don’t think so,” said Muskevitsch.

Some of the Soldiers know how to hand sew their patches, but they only stay on for so long before they start to fall off again. Muskevitsch knows this because he is on his fourth deployment.

“About half way through the mission, Soldier’s patches start to fall off because they’re washed so many times,” said Muskevitsch. “I want my boys to look good when they get home.”

MNF-W Campaign in the Western Euphrates River Valley Operation SAYAID II

Securing Freedom

Several operations through the Al Anbar Province were designed to cripple the insurgency and set up a secure environment for the December 15 Parliamentary Elections. The combined effort of Iraqi and Coalition forces closing the border to foreign fighters and cleared insurgents strongholds like Husaybah, Ramadi and Hit.

OPERATION IRON FIST

OPERATION LIGHTNING STRIKE

OPERATION STEEL CURTAIN

OPERATION RIVER GATE

OPERATION LION

OPERATION MOUNTAINEER

Accomplishments of OPERATION SAYAID

- Conducted over a five-month period
- Established numerous Fimbases, Forward Operating Bases, Camps and Combat Outposts through the Western Euphrates River Valley
- Set conditions for a successful elections
- Denied AQIZ sanctuary and freedom of movement
- Established an enduring ISF presence in Western Al Anbar Province along the Syrian border
- Established and protected DBE along the Syrian border
- Engaged local tribes in order to facilitate separation from T&FF activities, further the rule of law, and normalize the area economy

Attacks Drop

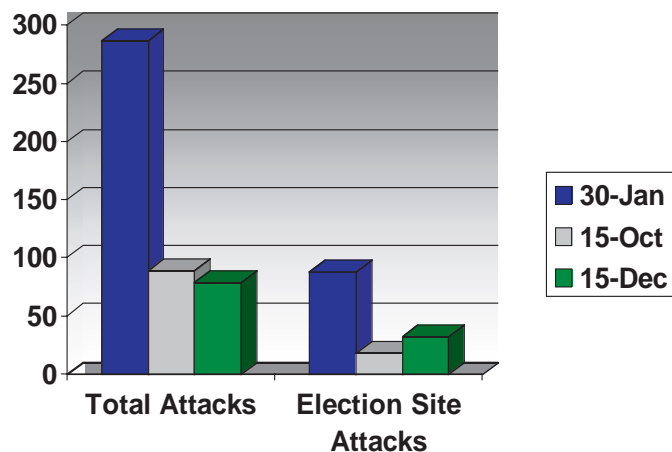
A comparative look at insurgent attacks during the three Iraqi elections in 2005. In less than a year, the total amount of attacks dropped by 72 percent, due in large part to operations in the Al Anbar region.

ATTACK COMPARISON

30 January Election to 15 October Referendum to 15
December Election

Time Period: 0430C 15 Dec 2005 – 0430C 16 Dec 2005

ATTACKS	Jan-05	Oct-05	Dec-05
TOTAL ATTACKS	287	96	79
ELECTION SITE ATTACKS	88	19	32



Treasure Hunters

Platoon perfects the art of finding weapon caches

Story and photos by Sgt. Dallas Walker
101st Airborne Division Public Affairs Office

BALAD — They were the last platoon from their company to start doing patrols.

Composed of cooks, communication specialists, medics and a couple of infantry guys, the Soldiers of the Cobra Black One platoon, Company C, 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment took to the streets outside of Logistical Support Area Anaconda with not much of a mission at all.

"We were like the black sheep of the battalion," said Sgt. Alike Naluai, Co. C section leader. "We would just sit on a route and pull security."

After a couple of weeks, someone gave them an idea — one they weren't thrilled about in the beginning, but ended up paying off in the long run.

Master Sgt. Beau Tatsumura, from the battalion S3 shop, helped show the platoon the ropes of hunting for weapons caches in June.

"He really motivated and encouraged us to go out and find weapons caches," Naluai said. "We figured we'd give it a try."

The platoon spent several weeks searching, but to no avail.

"We really hated doing cache searching at first because we had no method," said Spc. McHuy McCoy, Cobra Black

One medic. The team would go out and find nothing.

They ended up getting advice from 1st Lt. Ranjan Singh, Co. B platoon leader, Naluai said. His platoon had led the battalion in caches found at that point.

Singh's platoon started out much like Cobra Black One did — unsuccessful.

Singh's platoon found 44 weapons caches, the most in the battalion between April and June.

"It kicked off a cache craze," Singh said. "Everyone wanted to check out a mine sweeper and look. Of course, they found nothing."

They found nothing because they didn't know what to look for, Singh said.

Singh and his Soldiers changed missions to finding high-value terror suspects, so he decided to share his secret to finding caches with the Soldiers of Cobra Black One.

Then it happened. It was a day that these Soldiers would never forget July 27.

"Sergeant Naluai and 1st Lt. [Sam] Tagavilla came over the radio and said they think they found something. Everyone got

excited and waited by the radio to hear what was going on," McCoy said, who was pulling security at the time. "Then they pulled out a mortar. Then they pulled out 10 mortars. Then they pulled out 30 mortars."

According to Naluai, there were 49 mortar rounds in that first cache 30 60-mm rounds and 19 82-mm rounds.

"After that, we were hooked," Naluai said.

Since that first find in July, the platoon has found 37 caches.

"We had to prove ourselves to the battalion," Naluai said. "After we started to find the caches, our status has risen among our peers and our com-

mand."

Finding caches has become like second nature to the Cobra Black One Soldiers. It is the main focus of their daily mission, McCoy said.

"All day, you long for a cache."



Sgt. Alike Naluai, C Co., 100th Bn., 442nd Inf. Reg., searches a roadside for weapons caches in the Abu Krawar village outside of Balad on Dec. 4. Naluai is a part of Cobra Black One, a group of Soldiers whose mission is to find and remove weapons caches.



Pfc. Elise Lalmyen, C Co., 100th Bn., 442nd Inf. Reg., assembles a metal detector prior to a mission in the Alby Krawar village outside Balad on Dec. 4.

At least nine insurgents were killed and 16 terror suspects were captured in two separate incidents in southern Baghdad on Dec. 19-20.



A Paladin of 3rd Infantry Division's 1/41 Field Artillery Reg. is engulfed in dust, sand and smoke after firing from Forward Operating Base Speicher.

Big guns help near Tikrit

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills
1st Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office

FOB SPEICHER — Glory's Guns from 1st Platoon, Battery A, are making their presence known at Forward Operating Base Speicher, using their size and power to protect the Tikrit installation.

The platoon, from 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, were stationed at FOB Summerall near Bayji, but moved after the 101st Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade took over the Bayji sector, said Capt. J.T. Townsend, assistant fire support officer, 1st BCT.

"They were brought down (to FOB Speicher) because of the increased indirect fire threat," said Townsend. "Once Danger closed there was a higher indirect fire threat (to the division headquarters on Speicher)."

Their coverage of Bayji since their move to Speicher from Summerall has not changed significantly, said Townsend.

1st Platoon was busy during their tenure at Summerall. While there, Townsend said, they shot the second highest number of rounds in the 1st BCT area of operations. They were also one of only two platoons to conduct artillery raids.

During one raid the platoon rolled outside the gates of Summerall to the outskirts of Bayji, said Staff Sgt. Donnie Neal, a Memphis, Tenn. native and the 4th Section chief.

"It was fast and furious," said Neal. "We pulled in, shot and then left."

Besides the occasional artillery raid Neal admitted that manning the gun day in and day out "gets kind of old." "(Operation Iraqi Freedom I) was different," said Neal. They moved fast and reacted to where the enemy was, he said. "OIF III was more planned out."

1st Lt. William Dennison, 1st Platoon platoon leader, said living at Summerall wasn't bad at all. "We were totally detached (from our battalion)," said Dennison. "It was just me and the platoon sergeant. We were on our own."

"(The platoon's deployment to Iraq) was what we expected," he said, "except maybe not to shoot so much."



U.S. Army photos by Maj. Richard Bartoszuk
Staff Sgt. Donnie Neal, section chief, 1st Platoon, Battery A, 1-41 FA, sits inside a M-109A6 Paladin before firing from FOB Speicher.

School tired but students eager

Story by Denise Calabria

Gulf Region Division U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BAGHDAD — The Najaf Industrial School serves as a vivid example that it will take much time and considerable resources to rebuild Iraq after years of neglect suffered under Saddam's rule.

U.S. funds are only a part of the overall, broader effort that, with Iraq's own enormous human and capital resources and the support of other donor nations, will continue to guide this country on the road to rehabilitation.

The school sits on a large, tree-lined campus off a main city thoroughfare. Neatly dressed teachers and students gather across the grounds and await the beginning of classes.

During a recent U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division site inspection, an entourage of military and civilian employees, including Col. Richard Stevens, GRD deputy commander, visited the site. They drew a crowd of Iraqis eager to see them as they saw the school and toured the facility.

An Iraqi teacher said that the school provided a secondary education to more than 1,000 students who attended classes in shifts conducted by more than 130 teachers. The curriculum focused on electrical, mechanical, auto repairs, welding, and woodworking.

"After 25 years of neglect, this industrial school is just one of thousands of reconstruction projects competing for U.S. recon-

struction money. Those substantial funds were never meant to be anything more than a "jump start" until the resources of the Iraqi people and the rest of the world could be energized to continue the reconstruction effort," said Stevens.

Students attend the school for three years and, upon graduation, seek employment as tradesmen or continue on to university for an engineering degree.

Although the work approved for the Najaf Industrial School was complete, the facility still was far from meeting Western standards. The original contract called for mostly electrical repairs, replacing windows, and repairing bullet holes in the walls. Compared to the school's needs, these repairs were merely a drop in the bucket.

One example was the school's lecture hall. Broken windows riddled the room and served as an easy entranceway for birds and windswept dirt.

The teacher said, "The school is tired."

"In a short time," said Stevens, "we have made a huge difference for the people of Iraq, but, as this school so accurately reflects, there is much more to be done."

The Najaf Industrial School, as well as countless sites throughout Iraq, require additional work and attention. Others must step forward to put a new face on this "tired" school, Stevens said.

101st inducts new crop of NCOs, U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Rachel Brune



The 101st Brigade Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, inducted noncommissioned officers from each of its subordinate units into the NCO Corps Dec. 16 at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Theater.

Above: Sgt. Daniel Bradwell, of the 101st Sustainment Brigade, adjusts a cravat for Sgt. 1st Class Brian Fryer, readiness operations division NCOIC. The Soldiers served on the color guard for the 101st Brigade Troops Battalion NCO Induction Ceremony on Dec. 16. Left: Master Sgt. Harry Bartel, of the 101st Sustainment Brigade, lights a candle during the 101st Brigade Troops Battalion NCO Induction Ceremony.



Air Force Secretary visits Balad airmen

By Tech. Sgt. Pamela Anderson
332nd AEW Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE — Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne brought holiday greetings to the Airmen of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing on Dec. 18 and 19 and let them know that they are making a difference in the lives of Iraqi citizens.

"I want to pass on to the entirety of the 332nd and all its deployed units, thanks and a great holiday season from three grateful nations - the United States of America, the Iraqi Nation and the Afghani Nation," he said.

During his trip, Secretary Wynne visited units in Balad including the 555th Fighter Squadron as well as Airmen who provide armed truck convoy security and retrofit add-on-armor kits to vehicles.

"The American citizen-soldier has come over and spread democracy in such a faithful way that you can see it on the faces of the majority of people in Iraq and Afghanistan, their true appreciation," he said.

Port construction key to open global market

Story by Suzanne M. Fournier
Gulf Region Southern District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

CAMP ADDER — If Iraq wants to be a competitor in the global marketplace, the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, ISPS certification is necessary. Certification requires port facilities to have security assessments, security plans, trained security staffs, security drills, coast guards, and communication links to ships.

Port authorities must ensure their ports meet the new maritime regulations designed to counter terrorism by detecting and deterring threats to international security.

The rules, implemented in July 2004, also apply to all shippers who want access to certified international ports. If a shipper uses an uncertified port, his insurance rates are much higher and he may not be able to dock at the next international port if his last stop was at an uncertified port. Across the waterway from Umm Qasr Port, where lines of

cranes loom over the docks, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is constructing a Coast Guard Forward Operating Base.

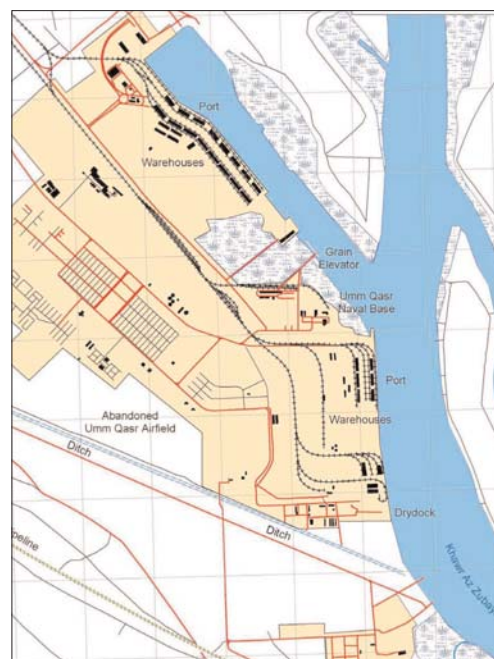
Dozens of local Iraqi construction workers are busy pouring concrete, building construction forms, laying brick, welding the pier, and grading the dirt to hasten the Coast Guard Base construction and move the port closer to ISPS certification.

The corps is systematically building the port's security management components by constructing a perimeter chain-link fence, secured points of entry, perimeter access roads, perimeter lighting, telecommunication conduit, observation posts, and truck staging areas.

These security upgrades are essential security structures in order for Umm Qasr Port to maintain and operate a secure port facility. The perimeter fencing will also connect the previously separated North and South Ports for greater efficiency and security. These security projects should be finished by the end of January.



Top: Construction is ongoing to build a Coast Guard FOB to provide security to the Umm Qasr Port. **Right:** Diagram of Umm Qasr's port.



Wreck removal clears Iraq's waterways

Story by Suzanne M. Fournier
Gulf Region Southern District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

CAMP ADDER — The Basrah Province learned that the third of three sunken wrecks was successfully removed from the navigation channel at Khor Az Zubayr Port earlier this month.

The wreck removal news was announced to the Iraqi news media at the Khor Az Zubayr Port observation tower by Iraqi Minister of Ports, Capt. Hussan M. Abdallah and Mr. Razzak, advisor to the minister of transportation for Iraq.

The three docks are used for import and export of fuel products, and the capability to moor three barges simultaneously is vital to Iraq's economic prosperity.

Oil is one of Iraq's major exports, but importing fuel products such as kerosene, gasoline, diesel and LPG, will continue

until Iraq refinery facilities are able to produce enough fuel products to meet consumption demands within the country.

This latest \$2 million wreck removal is the second effort to clear the Khor Az Zubayr Port. An earlier \$5.7 million contract raised four wrecks and removed more than 3 million cubic meters of dredged material from the navigation channels at docks 9, 10, and 11.

While dredging the docks to get an 11-meter channel depth, the three recently-raised wrecks were discovered in the soft sediment bottom blocking dock 10 and obstructing passage to docks 9 and 11.

Without the 11-meter depth, a fuel barge can only navigate into this area of the port during high-tide water depth of 13.5 meters (41 feet).

While unloading, the barge sits on the

soft sediment bottom, as the tide recedes to a depth of 7 meters (23 feet). The barge is stranded at the dock until the next high tide.

The Iraqi Port Authority can now resume their annual maintenance dredging at docks 9, 10 and 11 at Khor Az Zubayr Port to achieve 11-meter (36-foot) depth without the risk of damage to their equipment from the sunken wrecks.

The two Khor Az Zubayr Port contracts were accomplished by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Southern District using Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Funds.

Rebuilding Iraq

Projects that are shaping a nation



NISSAN - A rebuilt electrical distribution network will serve more than 20,000 residents of Nissan. Crews hung 13 miles of wire on 825 poles.

SAYRANBAN - The border between Iraq and Iran is more secure with the completion of an entry control point in Sayranban.



YOUSEFIYA - Repairs on Route Sportster will ease the traffic between Baghdad and Yusefiya.

RAMADI - Funded by the Commander's Emergency Response Program, six compact water unit projects are being set up in the Al Anbar Province. The units process about 500,000 gallons a day.

ABU GHRAIB CITY - Repairs to the Abu Ghraib water reservoir will now give more than 100,000 people in the area potable water.

ADHAMIYAH - About 250 students are learning in a newly refurbished school in Adhamiyah.



ISKANDARIYAH - Only 3.1 miles of pipe was needed to connect more than 4,000 residents to the water distribution network in Iskandariyah.



KUT CITY - Kut residents have fresh water with about 5 miles of water pipes installed, running water to 2,300 homes.



Iraqi Army Soldiers provide security for one of the polling sites in Tall Afar for the Dec. 15 Parliamentary Election.

U.S. Navy Photo by Photographer's Mate First Class Alan D. Monyelle

Refitting the Force

Photos of the emerging Iraqi Army

Photos can be found on www.mnf-iraq.com



An Iraqi Army 8th Division officer holds a sword during the certification ceremony of the 8th Division on Dec. 20, in Ad Diwaniyah.

U.S. Air Force by Senior Airman Patrick J. Dixon



U.S. Army photo by Sgt James P. Aguilar

Iraqi Security Force recruits wait to board an Iraqi Air Force C-130. These recruits are on their way to basic training in Al Kut.



U.S. Navy Photo by Photographer's Mate First Class Alan D. Monyelle

Iraqi Army Soldiers provide security for one of the polling sites for the Dec. 15 Parliamentary Election of the first four-year Iraqi government. Iraqi Army Security Forces are providing security for Tall Afar.